

**We Claim:**

1. A method of accessing centralized information in a postal environment using a web based interface, the method comprising the steps of:
  - a) collecting data from a plurality of networked mail processing apparatus operating in the mail processing environment;
  - b) transmitting the collected data from the plurality of mail processing apparatus to a server having a web based interface application;
  - c) storing the collected data in a database associated with the server;
  - d) providing secure access to at least one user to the server via a web browser application on a client device;
  - e) receiving at least one request from the user at the server for retrieval of selected data stored in the database;
  - f) retrieving the selected data and generating one or more interactive web pages comprising the selected data; and
  - g) presenting the one or more interactive web pages to the user via the web browser application on the client device.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
  - h) storing a copy of the collected data in local storage of a corresponding mail processing apparatus;
    - i) parsing the collected data into a plurality of record fields; and
    - j) storing and indexing the collected data via a database management system to the database.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

k) deleting the collected data in local storage of the mail processing apparatus after receiving delivery confirmation of the transmitted collected data from the server.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the mail processing apparatus comprises a data spooler adapted to format and transmits the collected data to the server.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the collected data comprises mailer related data, mail job data, and data relating to the operation and performance of one or more mail processing apparatus.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one user accesses the maintenance database and web browser using a personal digital assistant.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the server comprises a web application server and a database server.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the user accesses the server over a public interconnected network (internet) or an internal network (intranet).

9. A data collection and maintenance database machine for use in a networked mail processing system having a plurality of client devices with associated web browser applications, communication links and a plurality of computerized mail verification apparatus, the data collection and maintenance database machine having computer-executable instructions for causing the machine to perform the steps comprising:

a) receiving collected data from the plurality of mail verification apparatus;

b) parsing the collected data into a plurality of record fields via a web application

server;

- c) storing and indexing the collected data via a database management system in a database;
- d) providing secure access to at least one user via the web application server and web browser application on a client device;
- e) receiving at least one request from the user at the web application server for retrieval of selected data stored in the database;
- f) retrieving the selected data via a database application and communicating the retrieved selected data to the web application server;
- g) generating one or more interactive web pages comprising the selected data at the web application server; and
- h) presenting the one or more interactive web pages to the user via the web browser application on the client device.

10. The data collection and maintenance database machine of claim 9, wherein the steps performed further comprise transmitting delivery confirmation of the received collected data to the plurality of mail verification apparatus.

11. The data collection and maintenance database machine of claim 9, wherein the steps performed further comprise permitting secure access to a user via a personal digital assistant.

12. The data collection and maintenance database machine of claim 9 wherein the collected data comprises mailer related data, mail job data, and data relating to the operation and performance of one or more mail verification apparatus.

13. A mail processing and data collection system for use in a networked mail processing system having at least one client device with associated web browser application and communication links, the system comprising:

- a plurality of computerized mail verification apparatus each comprising,
  - an application software module for collecting mailer data, mail job data, and data relating to the operation and performance of a mail verification apparatus, and
- a data spooler able to receive the collected data from the application software module and to format the collected data for transmission to a web server;

the web application server adapted:

- to parse collected data received from the data spooler,
- to permit secure access to at least one user via the client device,
- to generate web pages containing user request data, and
- to present the web pages to the at least one user via the web browser application on the client device; and

a database server adapted

- to store and index collected data in a database and
- to retrieve and forward user requested data to the web application server.

14. The mail processing and data collection system of claim 13, further comprising at least one client device adapted to access the web application server using a wireless connection.

15. The mail processing and data collection system of claim 14, wherein the client device is a portable or handheld device.

16. The mail processing and data collection system of claim 13 wherein the user accesses the web application server over a public interconnected network (internet) or an internal network (intranet).

17. The mail processing and data collection system of claim 14 wherein the user accesses the web application server over a public interconnected network (internet) or an internal network (intranet).